The Massacre at El Mozote and Rufina Amaya's testimonio (the story of many rural Salvadorans during the eighties) have not been forgotten by many Salvadorans. Numerous websites on the Internet generating information on "El Mozote" attest to how the remembrance of that massacre has been adapted to and transformed by new technologies. More recently, Amaya's testimonio has been reproduced in media forms such an “electroacoustic,” ambient musical composition entitled “La Masacre del Mozote” (JC Mendizabal @ 1999) and the film Homeland (Dir. Doug Scott, 1999), both of which attempt to recuperate for a U.S.-Salvadoran reception the primary trauma of that violent past and to recall the memory of a war that cost the lives of over 75,000 people and set off the great Salvadoran migrations of the 1980s. For many Salvadoran immigrants, particularly new generations of Salvadorans born and/or raised outside of the country, El Mozote is a lost fragment of their history, the same history that produced their diasporic condition today. Recovering the story of El Mozote and of the Civil War in El Salvador, I argue, may enable an imaginary recuperation of the Central American homelands for those people who have little or no memory of the Salvadoran Civil War. Through a reading of
Doug Scott’s film *Homeland* and other texts, I explore the transmission of the “memory” of war to diasporic communities of Salvadorans through audio and visual-scapes.

**Reiterations of Rufina Amaya’s Testimonio**

On 11 December 1981, the U.S.-trained anti-insurgency Atlacatl Battalion of the Salvadoran Armed Forces carried out "Operation Rescue," killing more than seven hundred people in the village of El Mozote and its surrounding areas in northern El Salvador. Only one living person—Rufina Amaya—survived to tell the story of the massacre. Amaya’s account of the violent demise of El Mozote circulated in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* as early as January of 1982, although the U.S. government vehemently discredited these early news leakages of the event. Despite the immediate cover-up of the massacre, the story of El Mozote slipped through the channels of misinformation, prompting the International Community to take action. In her newspaper article of 14 January 2002, Alma Guillermoprieto, correspondent for the *Washington Post* and one of the first international journalists to reach El Mozote, described the macabre scene of El Mozote. Guillermoprieto explains walking into a village "looted of all contents" and reeking "of the sweet smell of decomposing bodies. This was El Mozote." All that was left of the people were "countless bits of bones--skulls, rib cages, femurs, a spinal column—[that] poked out of the rubble" (185). In an article published around the same time in the *New York Times*, Raymond Bonner reported, "it is clear that a massacre of mayor proportions occurred here last month." Both reporters would be forced by U.S. government officials to retract their news stories, and, in the United States, a silent uneasiness would permeate news reporting on Human Rights violations in El Salvador up through the end of the Civil War in 1992.
From the start, however, Guillermoprieto’s and Bonner’s articles drew from the testimonio of Rufina Amaya, as would Mark Danner’s feature article published in *The New Yorker* on 6 December 1993 and his spectacular book-length exposé entitled, *The Massacre of El Mozote: A Parable of the Cold War* (1994). Amaya’s testimonial narrative would also lie at the core of the United Nations' *Truth Commission Report*, which exposed Human Rights abuses in El Salvador, including the massacre at El Mozote. Amaya's collective narrative of death became primary evidence against the Salvadoran government’s crimes of genocide, which were compiled in the Truth Commission's publication *De la Locura a la Esperanza: La guerra de 12 años en El Salvador* (1993). Various other print documents and visual documentaries such as Bill Moyer’s "Portraits of a Revolution" (PBS 1992) and “Denial” (Dir. Daniele LaCourse and Yvan Patry, 1993) also called on the eyewitness Amaya to (re)tell her story. In the United States, a travelling musical theatre piece written by Chilean writer, scholar, and professor Marjorie Agosín entitled "Tres Vidas" (Three Lives) would pick up Rufina Amaya’s story and set it parallel to the lives of two other Latin American women—Mexican painter Frida Kahlo (1907-1954), and Argentine poet Alfonsina Storni (1892-1938).

At the heart of all these texts (and others to follow) lies Amaya’s chilling hour-by-hour account of how government soldiers killed men, women, and children, as she hid near-by in the bushes for eight nights. Amaya alone was left to answer the question: "¿Cómo fue Rufina?" (What happened, Rufina?). She remembers how:

A las doce del mediodía, terminaron de matar a todos los hombres y fueron a sacar a las muchachas para llevárselas a los cerros. Las madres lloraban y gritaban que no les quitaran a sus hijas, pero las botaban a culatazos. A los niños que lloraban más duro y que hacían más bulla eran los que primero sacaban y ya no regresaban.
At noon, they (the soldiers) finished killing all the men and then they took the girls to the hills. The mothers cried and screamed not to take their daughters, but they knocked them down with the butts of their guns. The children who cried the loudest and made the most noise were the first taken, and they did not return.]

Amaya describes waiting in the bushes, escaping on hands and knees through pasturing cattle, and hearing the children’s cries and recognizing her own children’s voices among them:

“‘Mamá, they are killing us; Mamá, they are choking us, Mamá, they are stabbing us!’” She recalls telling herself, “‘If I die, there will be no one to tell this story. There is no one but me.’” She would begin telling her story to the passersby who gave her shelter and the “international people” who interviewed her fifteen days after the massacre. In an attempt to escape the war, Amaya fled to and lived for seven years in the refugee camp of Colomoncagua in Honduras, which housed up to eight thousand Salvadorans during the war. Through it all, Amaya reminded herself that “What they did was a reality and we must be strong to tell it.”

Recalled, remembered, and reiterated in other texts, Amaya’s story of what happened to her family, friends, and community at El Mozote replays the primary trauma of war for many Salvadoran nationals, Salvadoran exiled and diasporic communities, and international spectators. The story of El Mozote, and by extension that of the nameless and countless disappeared in El Salvador, forms the referential corpus (the missing but not forgotten bodies) in many texts. Together these texts function as “irruptions of memory,” or symbolic acts that recall and trigger traumatic memories associated with a nation’s recent but unresolved history, as is the case of other countries that have undergone periods of war, dictatorship, and many forms of institutional violence. Examining the case of Chile, Alexander Wilde identifies the public acts and performed symbols of memory of the Augusto Pinochet dictatorship, which surface periodically in the form of “official ceremonies, national holidays, book publications, discovery of the remains of
disappeared persons, [and] the trial of an official of the dictatorship—which remind the political 
class and citizens alike of the unforgotten past.” 13 While Wilde cites “a series of expressive 
ceremonies” sponsored by the Chilean post-dictatorship authorities and public institutions and 
covered by the media to commemorate the dead and the disappeared during the Pinochet reign of 
terror, much less can be said for state-sponsored collective “healing” events in El Salvador.

**Public and Popular Acts of Memory in El Salvador**

Since the signing of the Peace Accords on 16 January 1992, in El Salvador, public acts 
recognizing and memorializing the Civil War have been few and far. The official imperative has 
been toward national “reconciliation” and “reconstruction,” and the production of a “culture of 
peace.” In El Salvador, hence, very few public acts commemorating the war and the disappeared 
have been sanctioned by the pre- and post-war ARENA government. As part of the post-war 
national reconstruction effort, in 1991 the Ministry of Education in El Salvador founded 
Concultura with the directive to implement cultural politics and projects that would promote a 
reunified Salvadoran national identity. Its mandate was to aid in the reconstruction of the 
"national patrimony," the promotion a cultural heritage, and the recuperation of Salvadoran folk 
traditions much under attack during the war and lost with the lives of peasants and rural folk who 
perished. The main objectives of Concultura were "to research, foment, promote, and 
disseminate culture, and valorize the arts" ["investigar, fomentar, promover y difundir la cultura 
y valorar las artes"] in a post-war agenda. Material cultural projects involved preserving folk-
culture, restoring the arts and traditional cultural expressions, and building innocuous 
monuments. Under the auspices of Concultura, the monument dedicated to *El hermano lejano*, or 
the Salvadoran emigrant, materialized as a public works project associated with this official
The familiar and colloquial term, “los hermanos lejanos” (the distant relatives) is used in El Salvador to refer to Salvadoran emigrants. For El Salvador especially, immigrants represent great symbolic and material capital, as immigrants routinely send generous remittances to their families. An important component of the Salvadoran economy, family remittances now surpass the total value of El Salvador's exports, including coffee, and exceed economic aid received from the United States. In El Salvador the more significant “irruptions of memory” that challenge the official program and agenda of national “reconciliation” and “reconstruction” are less public, yet more popular, as they are organized by religious, grass-roots, and non-governmental organizations, and the Salvadoran people themselves.

An article entitled “Salvadoreños conmemoran 15 años de la masacre de 1,000 campesinos” (Salvadorans commemorate 15 years of the massacre of 1,000 campesinos), which was published on 9 December 1996 in La Prensa of San Pedro Sula, Honduras, covered a popular commemoration ceremony that took place in El Mozote fifteen years after the massacre. The writer described how, "Cientos de salvadoreños observaron ayer con actos culturales y religiosos el décimo-quinto aniversario de la masacre de 1,000 campesinos, llevada a cabo por un batallón del ejército entre el 11 y 13 diciembre de 1981" [Yesterday, hundreds of Salvadorans commemorated with cultural and religious acts the fifteenth anniversary of the massacre of 1,000 campesinos carried out by a government battalion between 11 and 13 December 1982].

Seeking to bury the past, to gain amnesty for offending government officials, and to rebuild the country, Salvadoran authorities have left the remembrance of the war up to civil sectors, as is the case of non-governmental agencies and projects such as the “Museo de la Palabra y La Imagen” (the Museum of the Word and Image). The Museum has been dedicated to preserving the memory of the war and to fighting "contra el virus de la desmemoria" (against the virus of de-remembrane). In its few years of existence, the Museum has amassed a collection of items
such as photographs, *testimonios*, posters, recordings, video, print items, and other objects of material culture, which document the memory of El Salvador. The museum is in the process of digitizing its collections on CD-ROM, but its “virtual gallery” is open for viewing at the Museum’s web site. Beginning with the publication of its inaugural book, *Luciérnagas en El Mozote* (1996), the Museum has produced texts on themes of vital importance to the history and memory of the Civil War, has organized traveling installations throughout El Salvador, and has plans to open a permanent museum and library space in the future. According to the Museum’s current director, Carlos Henríquez Consalvi,

> Hemos lanzado nuestra primera publicación: *Luciérnagas en El Mozote (Testimonio)*, que integra testimonio e investigación periodística sobre la mencionada masacre ejecutada en 1981, y que fuerzas poderosas trataron de borrar de la memoria latinoamericana, primero negando su existencia, luego obstaculizando su investigación. Nuestra intención era dejar memoria escrita sobre hechos que no deben olvidarse, precisamente para que jamás se repitan.

[We have launched our first publication, *Luciérnagas en El Mozote (Testimonio)*, which includes testimonials and journalistic research about the massacre executed in 1981, and that powerful forces tried to erase from Latin American memory, first by denying its existence, then by preventing research on it. Our intention is to leave written memory over deeds that should not be forgotten, precisely so that they are never repeated.]

For Argentine scholars of memory construction, Elizabeth Jelin and Susana G. Kaufman, the Museum of the Word and Image would represent one of the “public memory sites” or locations of “memory struggle,” where negotiations occur in the construction of collective memory. In “Layers of Memories: Twenty Years After in Argentina,” Jelin and Kaufman explain that spaces
consecrated to memory such as museums are also “attempts to make statements and affirmations; they are facts and gestures, a materiality with a political, collective, public meaning” (41). These sites of memory construction are political spaces. Museums such as the one in El Salvador give space to testimonios and testimonial literature, which continue to record past violations and present cases of impunity. That is why it is not surprising that the Museum of the World and Image plays special homage to Rufina Amaya’s first-person and collective narrative, especially in its first publication entitled *Luciérnagas en El Mozote* (1996). Amaya’s narrative and the general story of the War would haunt policies of the Peace Accords, which were signed on 16 January 1992.

**Memories of War and Immigration**

In "Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy," Alexander Wilde identified the need of Chilean victims to deal with the “unresolved issues of historical memory” (19). He identified the victims of Human Rights violations in Chile as all those who suffered great losses during the Pinochet dictatorship, including “the survivors of the dictatorship’s worst infamies and the families of the disappeared” (19). In regards to countries such as Argentina, Paraguay, Colombia, South Africa, Cambodia, Vietnam, Guatemala, Panamá, El Salvador, and so forth, more localized and specific types of victims must be identified. Wilde makes a suggestive observation that might be applicable to the case of Salvadoran immigrants, when he states that

It is they [the disappeared] who bear the deepest wounds, but the victims of that harsh time are far more numerous than this tragic group. They include the tens of thousands unjustly detained and tortured or relegated to internal exile or terrorised in the sweeps of
the slums that continued through the dictatorship’s final decade, the more than one hundred thousand exiles, the uncounted citizens that waited for the knock on the door in the night or that still cannot find the means to discuss these years with their children.

(Wilde 18)

I would like to draw parallels between the Chilean experience of terror and exile and that of the Salvadoran experience of terror, displacement, and migration. As Wilde explains for Chilean victims of State terror, Salvadorans too feared the knock at the door. Many fled to refugee camps in Honduras (as did Rufina Amaya after the massacre at El Mozote); to other regions of El Salvador where war was not being waged openly; to neighboring countries of the isthmus, or to countries farther away such as the United States, México, and Europe. The victims of the war were also those who had to emigrate, never to return, never to reconcile themselves with their war memories, and incapable of passing them on to their children. The victims, hence, too include the children of the war and migration, who, born in other places, are disconnected from the history that set off their own diasporic condition.²² For diasporic Salvadoran communities, the recovery of historical memories is part of a collective healing process and an active recuperation of the Salvadoran imaginary homeland for those generations whose parents “still cannot find the means to discuss these years with their children.”²³ Indeed, in their Introduction to Genocide, Collective Violence, and Popular Memory: The Politics of Remembrance in the Twentieth Century (2002),²⁴ David E. Lorey and William H. Beelzey suggest the following:

While again there is no consensus, all seem to indicate that when memory is passed from one generation to the next, from the generation intimately involved with violence to one that has not experienced the same degree of violence, an important peace with the past can be achieved. Complete and lasting reconciliation may not be possible in the
Doug Scott’s film entitled *Homeland* represents an imaginary recuperation of war memories and the possibility of generational, national, and transnational reconciliation between those Salvadorans who stayed in El Salvador and those who emigrated to other lands.

The film *Homeland* is a post-war, diasporic narrative produced at the intersection of Salvadoran transnational cultures and the disparate locations that Salvadorans have come to inhabit in their migrations. As the war expelled many from El Salvador—their first homeland—, Salvadorans ventured toward often-makeshift homes in poverty-ridden areas of the global cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Houston, and Washington, D.C. The protagonist of the film, Adrian Santos lives in New York City after arriving there with his mother at the age of four; he has never returned to El Salvador for his legal status remains undocumented although he has grown up in the United States. By the time the film starts, Adrian Santos has become involved in street gangs, and on one fateful day he is caught in the line of fire in which a youth is killed. Accused of being an accomplice to murder and fleeing the scene of the crime, Adrian is deported to his “homeland”—El Salvador of which he has little memory and in which he has little connections. He returns to El Salvador as a “convicted felon,” “inmate number 874361,” and an “illegal alien.” The Salvadoran customs officer greets him with his new label: “Ese es el deportado” [He is the deportee]. At first, El Salvador is nothing but an inhospitable place for the deportee, the failed immigrant that Santos has become. While his immediate family remains in New York, Santos only has his Tía Leticia in El Salvador, who takes him into her home. During his first few weeks in El Salvador, Santos confronts his new reality, and must establish some connections with the country if he is to remain alive. Santos is the incarnation of the Salvadoran and Central American diaspora. Having escaped from the war into the United States as a child,
Santos cannot elude his history, which pulls him back to the homeland, an impoverished country where he barely speaks the language and knows few people.

During the last decades of the 20th century, many Central Americans were displaced in and from their homelands due to local political, military, and socioeconomic crises, but none more so than Salvadorans in such a compressed span of time. By 1989, over one fifth of the total Salvadoran population had been displaced, and as many as one million Salvadorans had been forced to immigrate across the isthmus and over wide expanses to the United States, Mexico, Canada, Australia, and Europe.25 The U.S. Census calculated that, by 1990, 1,323,830 Central Americans resided in the United States, of these well over 565,081 persons came from El Salvador.26 In an often-cited study, Nora Hamilton and Norma Stoltz Chinchilla claimed that Salvadorans account for almost seventy-five percent of the Central American population in the United States.27 Both the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the Tomás Rivera Policy Institute have reported that of the thirty-two million Latinos living in the U.S. in 1999 thirteen to fourteen percent were from Central and South America.28 After Mexicans, Salvadorans and other Central Americans comprise one the fastest growing subgroups of foreign-born Latinos in the United States.

In a reverse migration, Salvadorans are also returning to their country, and many of them are not returning by choice. They find themselves forcefully returning “home,” as deportees, in a reverse diasporic route that few critics have charted up to now. Deportees from the United States are undocumented immigrants / border crossers who, once apprehended by INS, are returned to their countries of origin. Most recently, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 broadened the definition of “deportable crimes.” Both documented and undocumented immigrants have been expelled from the United States on charges of “deportable crimes,” which are defined by INS and the State. Under Section 350 of the 1996 law,
criminal aliens are to be deported for grievous felony charges. The law also states that along with other crimes “[o]ffenses of domestic violence and stalking are ground for deportation.” Finally the law states that an “alien [who] is a danger to the security of the United States,” or an “alien who has been convicted of an aggravated felony (or felonies)” will be deported. Stricter law enforcement measures in states such as California are attendant to the deportation crisis that is afflicting not only Central American immigrants, but Latinos in general. As documented by various sources, deportation is reversing somewhat the flow of migratory patterns and has become the source of new transnational identities and cultures repatriated to countries such as El Salvador.

**Recovering the “Homelands”**

A child of migration and reverse migration (deportation), Adrian Santos of the film *Homeland* represents the displacement, dispersal, and resettlement of over one million Salvadorans across the world. Criminalized and penalized for "deportable crimes" (vis-à-vis the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996), deportees are changing the face of Salvadoran national culture; they are *re-patriating*, or re-constructing the *patria* and traditional notions of what it is to be Salvadoran and (Central) American in El Salvador. In a sense, they are children of an initial diaspora that begins with the wars of the 1980s and they are subjects of another diaspora that continues with their expulsion from the U.S. in the 1990s. They are forced returnees to a country with which they have various degrees of familiarity and affinity. As José William Huezo Soriano, Director of Homies Unidos (an NGO working on gang prevention and intervention in El Salvador) and a deportee himself, explains, deportees are
"permanent visitors" in El Salvador. Deportees are the cast of new transnational identities and cultures that are reshaping the Central American / Salvadoran homelands.\textsuperscript{30}

A failed immigrant,\textsuperscript{31} Adrian Santos becomes the protagonist of a narrative that is only becoming too familiar to many immigrants in the United States—the narrative of deportation, or reverse migration. Upon arriving in El Salvador, he finds a people still at war among themselves over limited economic resources and unresolved issues. In his first days spent in a jail cell in San Salvador, a drunken inmate warns Santos, that for him, “the war is just beginning, little brother.” The prison of the first scenes serves as a metaphor for the “tiny country [of] El Salvador [that] is like a huge prison,” as the wise drunk tells Adrian. Santos finds that in that small prison country he can find the same extended network of gangs he knew in the States—the MS, the 13, and the 18, now armed with AK-47s, M-16s, and grenades. In El Salvador, he encounters violence, hunger, poverty, and homelessness. In the small country, he also finds his history, his extended family, and himself.

A “fish out of the water,” as his Aunt Leticia calls him, Santos by the end of the 30-minute film has found his sea, or his homeland. His sea is an El Salvador that he could only recover through identifying and intersubjectively merging with his only living family member, Leticia, whose character, as we shall see through a chain of memories of a massacre in a village, is based on the figure of Rufina Amaya. Dedicated to Rufina Amaya in the final credits, the film suggests that Leticia’s memories are Amaya’s memories, which are passed on to Adrian as he hears his aunt tell the story of her massacred family, his people. It is through the telling of Leticia’s / Rufina’s story, then, that Adrian Santos acquires a memory that is not technically his, for he did not grow up in El Salvador. His parents did not tell him about the War in El Salvador that sent them looking for sanctuary in the United States. At Leticia’s side, witnessing her memories of the massacre that killed her husband and children, Adrian becomes her surrogate
child and he is transfused with the collective history of the Salvadoran family. Through the background rapping of the transplanted gang that invites Adrian to join them, the deported youth discovers a new anthem for his country: “Saludando a mi patria y a mi gente nativa. Me dejo caer con una historia de guerra que arruinó a mi país doce años” [Greetings to my homeland and my people. I was brought down with the history of war that ruined my country for twelve years]. Like many Salvadoran diasporic subjects, Adrian carries the violent history of displacement, which Scott’s film seems to suggest can only be resolved by reconciling with the past and present condition of El Salvador. Adrian’s breach of having left the “homeland” by force can only be sutured by re-membering, or reconnecting himself, with the people of El Salvador, a unification represented by Adrian and his aunt in the last scenes of the film. The physical embrace that joins Leticia and Adrian toward the end of the film represents the bringing together of Salvadorans who remained in the isthmus and those who live in other sites.

Visiting her war dead and memories in the cemetery, Leticia tells Adrian, “I was hoping that you would find me.” At the gravesite, Leticia tells Adrian about the massacre (at El Mozote) and about how she “wanted to forget everything … [but] God kept me alive so I wouldn’t forget.” Leticia’s memories reappear as flashbacks that Adrian and the viewer now witness; Leticia’s images have been transmitted to Adrian's consciousness: people being rounded up; screaming children being pushed into a house; women being shot at; and, finally, one woman being chased and hiding in the bushes. This is the memory of Rufina Amaya, Leticia, the Salvadoran people, and, finally, of Adrian Santos. After transmitting her memories to Adrian and embracing him, Leticia warns her reincorporated son, “If you forget the past, you can never change your future.” She reminds Adrian that Salvadorans must not forget El Mozote, because history has the power to change the future, or to repeat itself. The film ends with Adrian and Leticia fishing in a lake in El Salvador. Adrian’s “reality” and history are now "Salvadoran."
While he used to be a fish out of water when he arrived, by the end of the film he swims in the collective turbulent waters of Salvadoran society. As Leticia forecasts, “a big storm is coming, I can feel it.” Although the war in El Salvador is far from over, as the film suggests, the reintegrated Salvadoran community is ready to weather new storms.

Speaking about the Argentine Dirty War and its disappeared, Elizabeth Jelin and Susana Kaufman, in “Layers of Memories: Twenty Years After In Argentina,” analyze how Argentines remembered or disremembered their “conflicted and painful past,” which unlike the Salvadoran case was not an era of full-blown war, but “a period of extreme political violence and of state terrorism,” lasting from 1976 though the 1980s. Jelin and Kaufman are concerned with the construction of memory, its omissions, its silences, its conflicts, its layerings or condensations, and its inscriptions in the collective consciousness of a people (32). In the film Homeland, Leticia (vis-à-vis Rufina Amaya) echoes the phrase, “Remember! So as to not repeat!” With those words, she turns memory into an act of volition, reclamation, and confrontation with the past of El Salvador. In the case of Argentina after 1983, Jelin and Kaufman claim assert that there was a reclamation of public space (Las Madres and Las Abuelas taking back La Plaza de Mayo, for example), and a flurry of publication of first-hand personal narratives (testimonios, theatre, fiction, paintings, etc.) (33). As the narratives about the period came out, many people were forced to confront their own memories that had been silenced or repressed: “[I]t was hard for the general population to realize and believe that these unbelievable stories were part of a very recent and, for most people, silenced past” (35). In Argentina, justice came in the form of trying and prosecuting military leaders and other perpetrators of violence; hearing the testimonials of victims; (re)opening cases of Human Rights violations; and building community and collective memories through various forms of witnessing (36-37).
In their exploration of the construction of memories in Argentina, Jelin and Kaufman take into account that not only do people remember differently, but the temporal and physical distances in relation to a traumatic history shape the memory of it. This consideration proves useful in thinking about how Salvadoran diasporic communities transmit memories across space, time, and generations. Most generations after the immigrant generation (the one that traveled and experienced the violence first hand in the country) would not “remember” the past, in this case the war in El Salvador, because for them there was no “previous process of engraving, of fixing something in memory” (48), as Jelin and Kaufman explain. Instead, successive generations with no direct experience of fear, violation, and repression carry, as Jelin and Kaufman claim, “a presence of the absence”: Adrian Santos carries a lapse in memory where the memory of war and migration should be. He must rely on his intersubjective relationship with Leticia to fill this gap in memory, to recover as Jelin and Kaufman say, “the representation of what was once there and no longer is, the representation of something that has been erased, silenced or denied” (48). To gain access to the deferred experience, knowledge, and memory of war, successive diasporic generations must turn to the immediate carriers of memory—parents, older siblings, extended family, and people who remained in El Salvador, as well as classes, books, photographs, films, music, testimonios, and other instances of material culture.

For Jelin and Kaufman, the transmission of memories is always “an intersubjective relationship” that would fill (in) the gap in memory, which has been induced by separation and distance. They explain that

Social forgetting is also a collective intersubjective affair. It implies a social cleft, a rupture between individual memory and public and/or collective practices (that may become ritualized and repetitious), or a faulty line in the intergenerational process of transmission… Interpretations and explanations of the past cannot be automatically
conveyed from one generation to the next, from one period to another, from those who experienced the events to others who did not. As Yerushalmi notes, the past has to be actively transmitted to the next generation, and that generation has to accept that past as meaningful. (48-49)

Jelin and Kaufman recognize that no memory can be implanted or interpellated in another subject without that subject making that memory hers or his, without becoming an “open receptor” (49), willing to identify with what is relevant to her or him and to build new interpretations out of that memorial material. In the film, Homeland, Adrian Santos returns by force to El Salvador. As a deportee barred from reentering the United States, Santos suffers another trauma of separation from the U.S. “homeland” he had known all this life. This trauma of deportation is metonymically linked to the first trauma of migration and regressively to the trauma of displacement and war, which, I believe, make him receptive to Leticia’s memories that soon become incorporated into his own mental schema. As suggested by Jelin and Kaufman’s work, between Leticia and Adrian there is an active, intergenerational, and, I would add, transnational transmission of memory. By the end of the film, Adrian Santos has recovered from the trauma of separation, migration, deportation, and the double loss of the homelands forced upon him by geopolitical forces. El Salvador has become “meaningful” to him, and he has gained new meaning in his life.

Endnotes
Amaya, Rufina. "Solo me embrocaba a llorar."


Reproduced in Mark Danner, The Massacre at El Mozote. 188-192.


Pinderhughes, Raquel, Carlos Córdova, and Jorge del Pinal. “Central and South Americans.”


2 In this article, I will not be examining “La Masacre del Mozote” (JC Mendizabal @ 1999), but I explore that text elsewhere.

3 For a working definition of "diapora," see James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," in Cultural Studies, ed. Lawrence Grossberg et al. (New York: Routledge, 1992). Although many definitions of diasporic culture have been developed, an early general definition by Clifford works well here. According to Clifford, diasporic studies must recognize "that travelers move about under strong cultural, political and economic compulsions and that certain travelers are materially privileged, others oppressed" (108).

4 See Mark Danner, The Massacre at El Mozote: A Parable of the Cold War (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), for a book-length account of the findings of the massacre. A number of original documents, newspaper articles, and communiqués are compiled as appendices to the book.

5 For a retrospective look at how journalists Alma Guillermoprieto and Raymond Bonner were censored for writing about the massacre, see Mike Hoyt, “The Mozote Massacre: It was the reporters’ word against the government’s,” Columbia Journalism Review (January / February 1993) <http://www.cjr.org/year/93/1/mozote.asp> (15 March 2002).


10 “Tres Vidas” has been performed at many university venues, such as MIT, Suffolk University Law School, Wellesley University, Jacksonville University, Sonoma State University, and the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. The three women in the performance are played by Georgina Corbo, who is accompanied by the Core Ensemble, a chamber music ensemble comprised of cello, piano, and percussion. A press release can been read at the Web site <http://www.uop.edu/conservatory/calvidas.html> (15 March 2002).


12 The direct quotes that follow and my translations of quotes into English are from Amaya, "Solo me embrocaba a llorar."


15 Juan José García V. "¿Hacia dónde va El Salvador?: El futuro de las remesas familiares" Tendencias 52 (1996): 14. García states that family remittances continue to increase annually,
from $300 million in 1990 to more than $1,000 million in 1995. See also Manuel Orozco, Rodolfo de la Garza and Miguel Baraona, "Inmigración y remesas familiares," Cuadernos de Ciencias Sociales 98 (1997), and Rómulo L. Leal, "Solidaridad con el hermano lejano," San Salvador, El diario de hoy 15 September 1995.


22 Clifford, in "Traveling Cultures," recognizes that travel, as a term used to qualify diasporas, is problematic: "It [‘travel’] risks, however, downplaying the extent to which the mobility is coerced, organized within regimes of dependent, highly disciplined labor. In a contemporary register, to think of cosmopolitan workers, and especially migrant labor, in metaphors of 'travel' raises a complex set of problems" (107).


26 The population breakdown by countries is as follows: 565,081 from El Salvador; 268,779 from Guatemala; 202,658 from Nicaragua; 131,066 from Honduras; 92,013 from Panamá; and 57,223 from Costa Rica. See Raquel Pinderhughes, Carlos Córdova, and Jorge del Pinal,

27 Half of the current Central American population in the United States arrived seeking refuge and asylum under various immigration laws such as the 1980 Refugee Act, which made provisions for the official classification of refugees and political asylum seekers, and the 1986 Immigration and Control Reform Act (IRCA), which granted legal resident status to Salvadoran immigrants showing evidence of having lived in the U.S. prior to 1 January 1982. Subsequently with the arrival of a large number of undocumented immigrants in the 1980s, new legislation such as Temporary Protected Status (TPS), Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), and the American Baptist Churches (ABC) ruling sought to gain permission for temporary and extended stays for immigrants. It is estimated that half of the Central American population currently living in the United States arrived as of the 1980s. See especially Nora Hamilton and Norma Stoltz Chinchilla, “Central American Migration: A Framework for Analysis,” in Challenging Fronteras, and Seeking Community in a Global City: Guatemalans and Salvadorans in Los Angeles.


29 A transcript of an NPR interview with Mr. Huezo can be read at <http://www.radiodiaries.org/radiodiaries/weasel.html> (15 March 2002).

30 Most recently the stories of deported youths to El Salvador have been documented in Mother Jones (August 1999), the Los Angeles Times (November 1999), and a full length autoethnography entitled Solidaridad y violencia en las pandillas del gran San Salvador: Más allá de la vida loca (San Salvador: Universidad Centroamericana, 1998), which is based on
collaborative research and interviews conducted by *mara* (gang) members, Homies Unidos, and Save the Children. Homies Unidos, a gang prevention and intervention organization in San Salvador, offers various services for deportees from Los Angeles and other U.S. cities.

31. The labor of Central Americans in other locations is mythologized in the figure of the *hermano lejano*, whose tall tale overshadows the story of the deportee.

32. It helps to know that the National Anthem of El Salvador begins with the line, “Saludemos la patria orgullosos …” [Let us proudly greet the homeland …]. The youth in the film offer their own salutation to their version of the Salvadoran nation.